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New laws of special interest to teachers, administrators, school board members and others closely concerned with education are reviewed in this issue.

1959 LEGISLATION AFFECTING SCHOOLS, SCHOOL DISTRICTS and TRUSTEES . . .

Tuition rates for high school pupils attending school outside the county of residence, and elementary pupils attending school outside the district, were raised $100 and $75, respectively, by Senate Bills 35 and 36.

Adult education programs which are state-approved may be financed by a permissive one-mill levy on school district property; formerly this levy required approval by the voters. (Senate Bill 44.)

School districts which do not operate schools for three consecutive years will be abandoned in the future regardless of whether they provide transportation or payments in lieu of transportation. (Senate Bill 108.)

Enlarging a high school and acquiring land will be added to the purposes for which a special levy on a high school district may be voted, according to provisions of Senate Bill 145, now law.

A fifteen-mill county levy will replace the five-mill district levy and the ten-mill county levy now required for support of elementary schools under the Foundation Program, if Senate Bill 169 becomes law.

An increase in state reimbursement to districts with special education programs is provided by House Bill 94. The new law permits counting as three, instead of two, each mentally retarded child in a special program, and transportation reimbursement is now authorized for all handicapped children (formerly only physically handicapped) in state-approved special education programs.

The new fire drill law requires all schools with 30 or more children to hold fire drills once a week during the first month of school, then monthly.

Boards of trustees of county high schools may be elected, rather than appointed, if a majority of the voters in the county high school district favor changing the method of selecting board members, if House Bill 170 is signed into law. A method of electing seven board members to provide representation from the various districts affected, and elimination of the county superintendent from the board, are included in subsequent provisions of this measure.

. . . Schools, School Districts and Trustees . . .

Selection of the district superintendent of schools may be participated in by the additional members of the board of trustees representing the common school districts within a high school district. (House Bill 476.)

Elementary school emergency budget data must be published in a local newspaper, if any, or in the official county newspaper, if Senate Bill 146 is signed.

The age for compulsory school attendance is lowered from 8 to 7 years by House Bill 202.

A new foundation program schedule, awaiting the Governor's signature, is provided by House Bill 255; not an appropriation measure, this bill establishes an overall increase of about 3.5% in the minimum amount a district must spend for support of a school. Another measure on the Governor's desk, House Bill 532, appropriates $17 million for public school equalization purposes in 1959-61.

Red lights will replace amber on the front of school buses under provisions of House Bill 266, now law.

A Commission on School District Reorganization to study organization of districts and propose legislation for reorganization to the 1961 Legislature will be appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction if House Bill 306 is signed into law. Represented on the Commission will be legislators, school board members and school administrators. An appropriation of $25,000 is provided for the study.

Fees for the examination of accounts by the State Examiner are raised by House Bills 362, 364 and 365, which apply to schools and school districts.

LEGISLATION AFFECTING TEACHERS . . .

The ceiling on teachers' salaries for retirement system purposes will be raised from $5,000 to $6,000 if the Governor signs Substitute House Bill 53.

The minimum retirement benefits paid by the Teachers' Retirement System are increased from $600 to $900 annually for those meeting the statutory requirements, pending the signing of House Bill 167.

The employer's contribution under the Teachers' Retirement System is increased from 3.5% to 3.75%, pending the Governor's signature to House Bill 168.

Five classifications of teaching certificates will replace the present 25 types of certificates, according to provisions of House Bill 144, now law. The changes are those recommended by the State Committee on Teacher Supply. Holders of present certificates will not lose any rights or privileges. The new types: Professional, Standard, Administrative-supervisory, Vocational, Provisional. The present elementary school standard certificate will be retained on a renewal basis. An emergency authorization to teach will replace the present emergency certificate. Changes will take effect July 1, 1959.

LEGISLATION AFFECTING the STATE BOARD of EDUCATION . . .

Two state boards, one for the university system and one for elementary schools, would replace the present State Board of Education if the voters approve a constitutional amendment to be placed on the ballot in 1960, as provided by Senate Bill 7. The proposed amendment to the Constitution assigns to neither of the two new boards the high schools, or the state custodial institutions which are now under the State Board of Education.

A request that fees charged non-residents of the state who attend the units of the University of Montana be raised by the State Board of Education is made by House Joint Resolution No. 3.

A chairman of the State Board of Education, to serve in the absence of the Governor, may be elected by the board members, along with other officers, if House Bill 192 becomes law.

The State Board of Education immediately will become the Regents of the University of Montana, if the Governor signs House Bill 194. The present State Board of Education would continue both as Regents and in its other capacities, should the constitutional amendment called for by Senate Bill 7 fail to be approved by the voters.

A biennial audit of the accounts of the units of the University of Montana will be made by the State Examiner if Substitute House Bill 293 is signed.

Montana Children's Center is the new name for the Orphans' Home at Twin Bridges, provided by Substitute Senate Bill 4.

LEGISLATION AFFECTING the STATE DEPARTMENT of PUBLIC INSTRUCTION . . .

The State Correspondence School may extend its services to inmates of the State Prison, according to provisions of House Bill 133, now law.

A Department of Public Instruction under the State Superintendent was officially created by House Bill 277, which legalizes usage of the term and facilitates internal reorganization of services.

An increase in salary from $7,500 to $8,500 annually will apply to the State Superintendent elected in 1960, according to provisions of Substitute House Bill 455, which raised the salaries of elected state officials.

LEGISLATION AFFECTING COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS . . .

Salaries of county officers in counties having a taxable valuation of $70,000,000 or more are raised by House Bill 350, which provides two additional categories under the taxable valuation schedule for setting salaries.

LEGISLATIVE APPROPRIATIONS . . .

The Public School Equalization Fund will receive $17,050,023 from the State Treasury for the period July 1, 1959 to June 30, 1961, under the terms of House Bill 532. This amount will go toward the support of the Foundation Program, along with certain revenues from the state income tax, the state corporation license tax, U. S. oil and gas royalties paid to Montana, and interest and income from state school lands. The sum of all these revenues in the next two years will determine the extent to which the State will be able to support the Foundation Program.

Funds to administer the National Defense Education Act in Montana from July 1, 1959 to June 30, 1961 total $200,000 according to provisions of House Bill 529. This will permit Montana to qualify for an equal amount of federal money, leaving nearly a million dollars in federal funds allocated to Montana but unmatched by the State. However, the provision of administrative machinery by House Bill 529 will make it possible for Montana schools to obtain the million dollars individually by providing their own matching funds. Details later.

LEGISLATION AFFECTING STATE SCHOOL LANDS . . .

State school lands under lease for grazing purposes should provide more revenue for the Interest and Income Fund for schools, under Senate Substitute for Substitute House Bill 426, now on the Governor's desk. The measure increases grazing rentals.

The Legislative Council is directed by House Joint Resolution No. 4 to study revenue produced by state school lands and to recommend any needed improvements to the 1961 Legislature.

SPECIAL NOTICE . . .

A National Aviation Education Workshop for teachers is called to the attention of all Montana educators by House Resolution No. 9. The workshop will be held at Montana State University, Missoula, June 29 - July 31, 1959, under the sponsorship of M.S.U., the U. S. Air Force, the Montana Aeronautics Commission and the Civil Air Patrol. The House Resolution encourages Montana teachers to attend, along with teachers from all over the United States. The program will be directed by top flight aviation educators made available by the Air Force, and will cover supersonic aircraft operations, rocket developments and astronautics.

FURTHER DETAILS . . .

Items in this issue are merely highlights of some of the education legislation of widest interest. For complete details regarding changes in school laws, please refer to the 1959 Supplement to Montana School Laws, soon to be printed, or write to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

THURBER'S HELENA